

A Private Universe (22 A1)

From Cape Town take the N1 through Du Toit's Kloof and take the right-hand turnoff for Rawsonville. After some distance turn left to Goudini and go past the Goudini Spa. After a few km turn left onto the farm marked Breeland (Lee & Jones). Proceed down the twin concrete tracks for 100m then take a right towards wine cellars. At the cellar take a small road down to the left between the two buildings, past the dam, down a short, steep incline, and then for about 5km across vineyards to the home of owners Mortimer and Louise Lee. From the farmhouse, walk (or drive with a high clearance vehicle) ~2km to the bottom of the kloof where the huge, red wall will come into view high on the left.

About 100m before the road crosses the rocky stream bed a small jeep track heads left into the kloof along a water pipe. Follow this. After a short distance it becomes a path and reaches the river at a small weir. From here head up the river all the way (2-3 hours), boulder hopping and wading. Best to take strops/crocs/similar and put your dry shoes on later once you hit the steeper, drier section. If many people have been up recently and trodden a path through the fynbos on the side of the river then it may be faster than in the river. Otherwise not! If in doubt, stay in the river.

High up in the kloof where it is steeper and drier you will get to a 20m high waterfall with a massive chockstone. Use a fixed rope on the right to bypass it. The last, reliable water is found below the chockstone. The small camp site is at the top of the kloof on the left, directly below the amphitheatre and about 15 minutes above the waterfall. The amphitheatre is a 500m high, north-east facing, red wall of overhanging rock. The route is traditional but uses approximately 100 bolts on 15 belay stances and on hard, airy climbing sections where natural protection would be scarce or non-existent.

Contact numbers: 023 344 3127 (Mortimer and Louise Lee), 023 344 3129 (office), 082 370 1485 (farmer), 083 656 0085 (manager).

Gear: A normal, largish rack consisting of cams and wires should be sufficient. Cams from small up to the equivalent of a Camelot #4 should do, preferably with doubles in the middle sizes. A normal, full set of wires is sufficient. No micro wires, pitons, or other special gear is required. Lots of long (60cm) slings are useful as well as some quickdraws. Two 60m trad ropes are recommended. If you are hauling a big bag then you will also need a haul line and gear (eg. non-return pulley and jumar).

1. 45m (20) Scramble up the obvious pillar in the middle of the main (right-hand) wall with a big, leaning block at it's base. Belay atop this pillar. Head up to an overhang, traverse a few metres right, and break through the overhang. Head up and a bit right. Belay somewhere higher in vegetated, easier ground. Who knows where the route really goes - take the line that looks best.

2. 35m (17) Scramble up and to the left to belay at a small tree at the base of an obvious, flaky, left-facing corner.

3. 25m (19) Climb the flaky corner and then out right around the roof and up to a stance.

4. 25m (17) Traverse out right then up an obvious corner to reach a roof. Traverse back left under the roof then continue further left to a stance.

5. 40m (16) Move further left on the ledge until able to pull onto the grey face and into a small, left facing, layback corner. Continue up to a stance.

6. 25m (21 A1) From the right end of the ledge follow bolts up and left past a large razor flake/block. Traverse left to break through the roof and up to a stance.
Gear: A #4 Camelot is useful.

7. 25m (19) Head up and right to a stance.

8. 40m (20) Head up to below the roof and an overhanging corner (currently with some old, abandoned gear in it). Traverse spectacularly right on hard, orange rock then up to a good sleeping ledge. From the ledge move around to the left to a higher ledge at the base of an overhanging recess.

9. 30m (20 A1) Climb the recess (mostly free). Break right to reach a hanging, bolted stance.

10. 30m (22 A1) Climb directly up to the huge, overhanging bulge and use the hand crack to climb spectacularly out and over to easier, vertical ground. Head up to a hanging stance.

Gear: A #4 Camelot is useful.

11. 25m (22 A1) Head up and left to the overhanging, orange face. Rail spectacularly out left past two bolts and awkwardly get up onto a small ledge. Go straight up the steep corner on the left and aid through some overhangs to reach a bolted, semi-hanging belay on a tiny ledge. Don't go right and up on the grey face despite some old, fixed gear.

12. 20m (16) Climb up to a big ledge and traverse right a few meters through some bush. Head up and right in a corner to reach a large ledge. Possible bivy here.

13. 35m (22) Walk/crawl to the left of the ledge to a bolted anchor. Follow bolts up the steep, orange face. Traverse a little to the right and straight up to belay halfway up the pillar.

14. 10m (19) Climb the pillar to a single bolt stance on a sloping ledge. Can be combined with the previous pitch.

15. 40m (19) Move left to an orange face. Follow bolts up and right. Continue up and right to a stance with 3 bolts above a small roof.

16. 40m (18) Climb up past a loose flake, taking care not to drop it onto the belay. Move up and right through vegetated ground to belay just right of the big roof.

17. 20m (19) Head up the recess then left onto the face. Up and left past a vertical crack to a stance on a small ledge.

18. 50m (22) Head up the obvious V-shaped recess. When the recess steepens climb up and left on the orange face using underclings. Pull past a chockstone and back right into the steep recess. Grovel up (or stem) through the jam offwidth/chimney and past some dirt to the summit.

Gear: A #4 Camelot is useful.

Descent: There are three options:

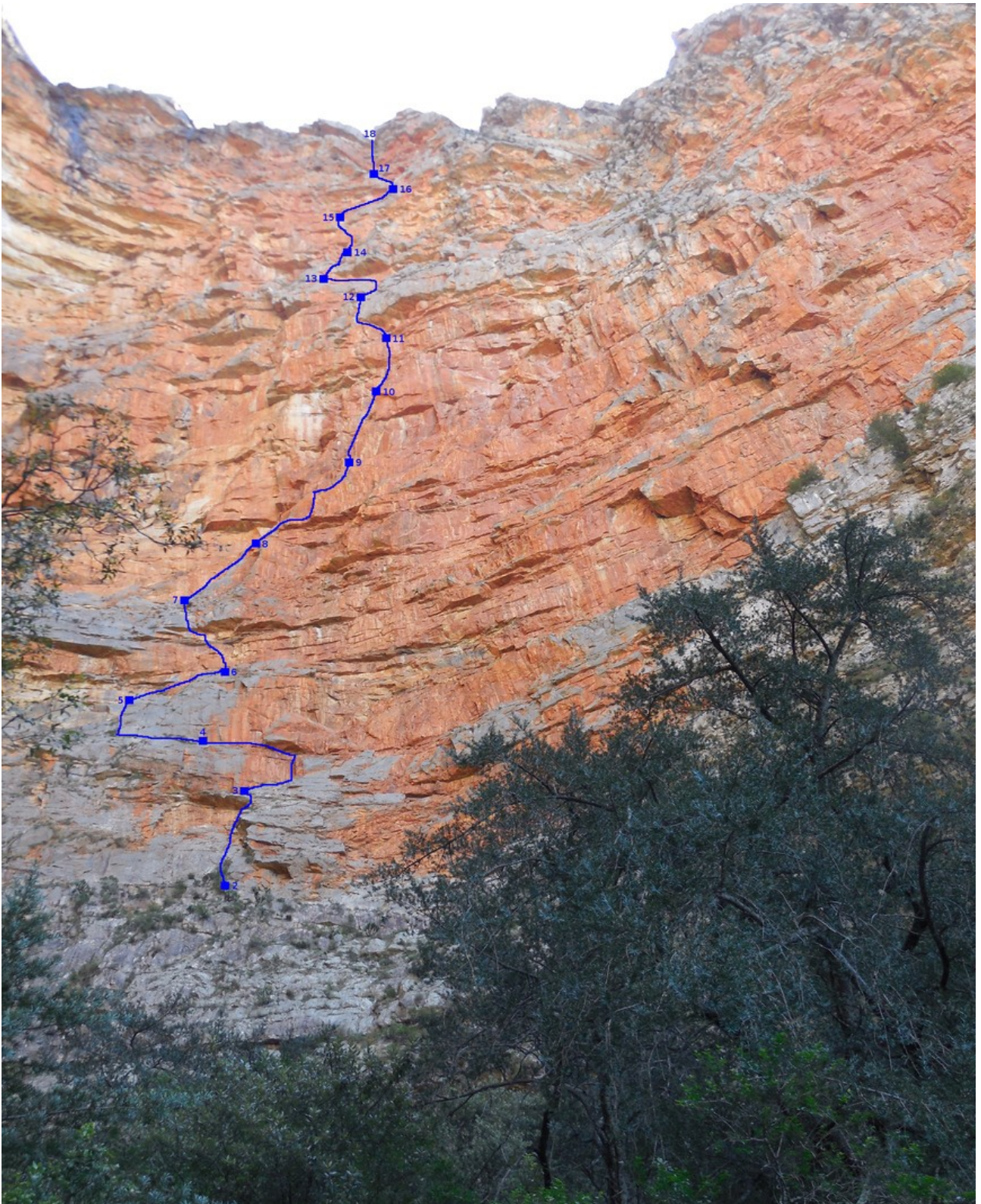
Firstly, you can walk out ~15km to Bain's Kloof Pass (long but easy). From the top of the route head down to the right (NW) over easy terrain to reach a col with huge boulders. A 1m tall cairn on a small boulder in the middle of the col marks the small trail that heads left/west towards Bain's Kloof. Follow the trail along the left bank of the river until forced into the river. Walk downstream about 50m and when the river turns right, cross it to gain the left bank again and rejoin the small trail which shortly turns to a path. Follow the path to Junction Pool. At Junction Pool turn right on the track to get to the top of Bain's Kloof Pass. About 3-5 hours.

Secondly, you can walk/scramble(/abseil?) down the steep ridge on the right of the amphitheatre. From the cairn at the col head right down the valley, staying on the right hand side and maintaining altitude, aiming for the ridge with small trees far ahead. The ascent kloof lies just beyond the ridge. Contour carefully towards the ridgeline and continue down its crest until forced over and down right into the ascent kloof. A steep and tricky slope regains the ascent gorge. About 4-5 hours.

Thirdly, one can rappel back down the route. Almost all the stances are bolted and several stance bolts have loweroff rings. Others have leaver biners. Take spare leaver biners and rap cord to link the anchor bolts if you intend to use this option. Many of the abseils are very technical (overhanging and sideways) so you will need to place gear to keep yourself in and a device to lock off on the rope so that your hands are free. The last two abseils deviate from the route line and are more direct with an extra bolt station (a single bolt). The original topo shows the penultimate abseil starting from the top of our pitch 3 (pitch 4 on the original topo). This would be quite diagonal to the left. We abseiled from the top of pitch 4 (pitch 5 on the original topo). One still needs to head a little left down to the last bolt and it is about 65m! The last bolt is placed underneath a small roof below a left-facing, bottomless, 5m tall corner so will be quite hard to spot from above. However, we left a short section of static rope hanging down the corner which backs up the single bolt and could be

used to get down the last 5m after you reach the end of your ropes. It is also easier to spot from above. The final abseil is about 45m. Approximately 10-12 abseils taking about 5 hours.

FA: Dave Davies, Hilton Davies, Matthew Lloyd-Sim (2002)



The line of A Private Universe starting at Pitch 3. Who knows where the bottom two pitches really go.